***ASSESSING NOISE POLLUTION***

***Step #1: Assess noise sources***

A workplace assessment or inspection will tell you which areas in your workplace have high noise levels. To do the assessment you must measure sound levels according to the Noise-induced Hearing Loss Regulation 7 (2)(c). This needs to be done every 24 months, or if the sound level is 85dB or higher, Regulation 10 (1) will apply – which is control of noise exposure. You may need to do the assessment at different times of the day to make sure all noise sources are identified.

***Step #2: Identify existing noise controls***

In this step you must see what has been done to control the noise that you picked up in your assessment.

***Step #3: Assess the time of exposure***

This is where you document how often and for how long workers are exposed to the noise.

***Step #4: Measure sound levels every two years***

Sound level measurement must be conducted at least once a year, according to the Noise-induced Hearing Loss Regulation, unless new machinery is installed or the building structure designs change.

***Step #5: Implement controls***

If unacceptable noise zones are identified, you must follow these six guidelines (*Noise-induced Hearing Loss Regulations*):

1. First try to reduce the level to below 85dB(A) where you can;
2. Demarcate the noise zone boundaries by placing notices (symbolic signs) in conspicuous places along the noise area;
3. Prohibit any employee from entering without wearing hearing protective equipment such as earplugs or earmuffs (which must comply with the SABS code of practice 1451);
4. Issue hearing equipment free of charge;
5. Limit the exposure time; and
6. Do audiometric testing of employees once a year.